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13/60-1
USIB-D-41.14/32
(COMOR-D-13/8)
18 April 1963 7

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Protection of Satellite Reconnaissance Vehicles

The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance has agreed that the attached paper would be useful to the National Reconnaissance Office, and therefore recommends that USIB authorize forwarding it to NRO for use as appropriate. It relates directly to the first recommendation of the paper on "Requirements for Collection by Satellite Image-Forming Sensors" (USIB-D-41.14/28; COMOR -D-13/4).

[Redacted Signature]
Executive Secretary

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NRO review(s) completed.

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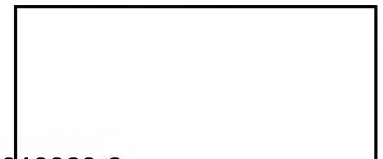
PROTECTION OF SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE VEHICLES

1. There is a need to include in the research and development program for reconnaissance satellites means of reducing their vulnerability to interdiction by Soviet anti-satellite weapons systems. NIE 11-3-62 provides the agreed community opinion that a potential threat to satellites exists at the present time. NIE 11-3-62 also estimates that the Soviets might be engaged in the development of a specific anti-satellite missile system, possibly in conjunction with their ABM program.

2. The current threat is based on the concept that the Soviets could launch an IRBM or an MRBM on such a trajectory as to intercept a satellite in orbit at or near the apogee of the intercepting missile. Sufficient orbital data would have to be acquired to permit prediction of the intercept point prior to launching the intercepting missile and would probably involve radars and tracking facilities from other systems or programs. Because in most cases the intercepting missile would have to be launched prior to the appearance of the satellite above the horizon, this technique is often called "blind firing". Such a system would probably require the use of a nuclear warhead.

3. Development of a specific anti-satellite missile system, while some time in the future, e.g. 1965-1966, is visualized as a system having the capability to make an interception on an early, perhaps the first, orbit within range.

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4. The need for reducing the vulnerability of reconnaissance satellites is expected to vary both in terms of the type of mission and in terms of international tension at the time. For example, the use of a reconnaissance satellite in times of crisis for indication of hostilities might be more likely to be subject to interception than "routine" surveillance vehicles in times of relative calm.

5. The research and development program should include efforts to reduce the vulnerability of satellite reconnaissance vehicles by various means, e.g.

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This work must be accomplished prior to the first "incident" in which a Soviet intercept is attempted in order to preclude a long period in which satellite reconnaissance would be unavailable.

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